states withholding or delaying their mandatory financial contributions to the United Nations. The Government continue to actively follow up this matter with the UN authorities as well as other member states. The Government has also raised this issue in the UN General Assembly and its Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Out of a total of nearly US $ 706 million owed by the UN to member countries for participation in peacekeeping operations, a payment of nearly US $ 70 million is currently due to India.

Killing of Indians and Pakistanis in Iraq

1848. SHRI RAJ KUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a militant group 'Ansar al Sunna' an Al Qaeda linked group in Iraq, claimed in September, 2006 that it killed 10 Indians and Pakistanis when they "were on way to Syria;

(b) if so, whether all deceased Indians were identified by Iraqi authorities and their families informed by Government;

(c) if not, whether the matter has been taken up with the Iraqi authorities and their response thereto; and

(d) who would be liable to pay compensation to families of those killed by militant groups abroad?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI *E.* AHAMED): (a) No. On August 31,2006,14 men including three Indians and eleven Pakistanis were killed by some unidentified attackers in Iraq while they were travelling from Damascus to Karbala.

(b) and (c) They were identified by their relatives/fellow pilgrims travelling in the same group as Shri Jaffar Mashaddy from Nagaram near Vishakhapatnam, Shri Mohiyuddin Beg from Hyderabad and Shri Mohamed Ahmed Ali from Hyderabad. The RPO in Hyderabad also got in touch with the relatives of the persons affected in this incident. The Iraqi authorities were informed about the incident by the Indian Embassy in Baghdad and they assured suitable assistance.

(d) There is no policy for payment of compensation.